GANDHISM RECONSIDERED

BY

M. L. DANTWALA

REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION

PADMA PUBLICATIONS LTD
BOMBAY

First Published, April, 1944
Second Edition, July, 1945

Printed by V. R. Sawant at the Associated Advertisers & Printers Ltd., 505, Arthur Road, Tardeo, Bombay 7 and Published by Morarji Padamsey, for Padma Publications Ltd., Laxmi Building, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Road, Fort, Bombay.

"The extent of mechanization and size of an industrial plant depend upon the relative scarcity and cost of labour and capital. Under present conditions it is more profitable in China to use more labour power and less capital equipment, not to speak of the importance of building up purchasing power in the market through returning as much in wages to the consumer as possible."

—*China Builds for Democracy*

"Taking into account the fact that while India has plenty of labour, her capital resources are comparatively small, we think that industries should be organised in such a way that over the whole planning period the ratio of capital including land and building, to net product would not be too high."

—*A plan of Economic Development of India*

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

It is not without considerable hesitation that I am allowing this small brochure to face the light of publicity. This 'defence,' of Gandhiji's economic thought is deliberate. I feel that before we find fault or prick holes in it, we must place it in the best possible light. We must avoid the temptation to exploit the inconsistencies and the pre-scientific phraseology so obvious in Gandhiji's writings, transcend the prejudice against their all-pervading religious and moral atmosphere, and, with as much scientific detachment as we can lay claim to, dive for the core of Gandhian ideology. I am impelled to emphasise this because I find that reactions favourable or otherwise to Gandhiji's writings are still in the emotional stage, the usual fate of all contemporaneous thought.

It may be admitted that doubts and disillusionment about the hundred per cent scientific validity of orthodox Marxism are responsible for a frame of mind which compels a reconsideration of Gandhism. But this need not be taken as a slur either on Marx or Marxism. Philosophies much younger than that of Marx are already either out of date or in the melting pot. It only shows that thought on social questions is taking rapid strides. I think the most fruitful attitude to take on such occasions is the one which,

while accepting certain values as permanent, still manages to keep an open mind. Therefore, though, even today, I accept without hesitation what I consider the basic values of Socialism, I undertake this reassessment of Marxism necessitated by (a) the sheer evolution in the forces of production and the consequent alterations in social relations and (b) recent additions to our knowledge of the social sciences.

Two phenomena which either fell outside the penetrating and far-sighted vision of Marx or emerged subsequently out of the social cauldron are the growth of technology and unemployment and the ever widening disparity between the relative strength of the State to coerce the people and of the people to resist that coercion. Both compel a revision of our blue prints of an egalitarian society and of the technique of achieving it. In this essay we are primarily concerned with the first phenomenon though the argument is also influenced by the second.

A third factor, which is not so germane to the present essay, is what Peter Drucker calls the end of the economic man. The accent on the economic motive, which looked so appropriate to an age in which capitalism came to full bloom, must soften considerably in an era in which capitalism is becoming senile and is drawing out an existence with two of its basic assumptions, private enterprise and private profit, atrophied. It is possible that men hereafter will be moved as deeply and as irresistibly by urges and values other than economic or material. Today, Gandhiji stands forth as the foremost champion of such values.

Marx is the prophet of an age ushered in by the Industrial Revolution, Gandhiji of the age of Technology and Totalitarianism. Confining ourselves to the economic sphere WANT (scarcity) was the challenging problem of the former, WORK (unemployment) is that of the latter. Marx suggested the socialisation of the machine, Gandhiji suggests its simplification. If you retain the giant machines, you will require giant experts and technicians to manage them. Our dependence upon them will be so complete that it will result in our exchanging one ruling class for another, the capitalist of today giving place to the Manager[1] of the giant industrial State of tomorrow. It is no doubt true that with the socialisation of the instruments of production, the *de jure* ownership will pass into the hands of the workers but the very size of those instruments will, as a matter of fact, put the expert manager in complete control of them.

If the contention that the socio-political make-up of a society is the reflex of its economic pattern is true, it is inevitable that a society with economic arrangements based on mechanised industry should produce a bureaucratic State. What has actually happened in Russia, inspite of the liquidation of capitalism, provides a good illustration of this. The Russian Revolution instead of resulting in a society with larger freedom for the common man, created a State which hedged freedom more drastically than is done even in a bourgeois society. To take a single instance, no political party other than the C. P. is allowed to func-

1 The word is suggested by Burnham's *Managerial Revolution.*

tion legally in Soviet Russia. It would be illogical to blame Stalin for these curtailments of freedom and it is possible that, when the period of crisis is over, we may perhaps find a relaxation of the present totalitarian rule. But in a society in which production depends upon large and complicated machines, dictatorship —however benevolent—of the expert is inevitable. That is exactly why, instead of witnessing the 'withering away' of the State in Russia or even a tendency in that direction, we notice greater and greater intensification of State life, or, as Burnham would like to call it, its managerialisation.

Burnham regards the Managerial State as the inevitable and only alternative to capitalism. But there is another which perhaps has yet to discover as able an exponent. That alternative is a society in which the instruments of production are so simplified that the common man can ply them and understand them and ofcourse own them individually or collectively. Such a society will also need its research scholars and expert technicians, but it will not assign to them a role in which they constitute themselves into a new ruling class. Further, this will be the one type of society in which the economic power will be so widely diffused, that objective conditions will be, for the first time, ripe for the State to wither away.

I am conscious that I am embarking upon rather an ambitious adventure, and I am equally conscious of my own limitations in doing so. But of late, I have found so much sympathetic material in the writings of several thinkers here and in the West that I am tempt-

ed to say publicly what I have been ruminating in my mind during the last two or three years.

I simply cannot write anything, much less see it published, without considerable help from friends. Sri. Kishorelal Mashruwala and Sri. Vaikunth Mehta were kind enough to go through the manuscript very carefully and I received valuable suggestions from them. In Nasik Road Central Prison, Acharya Bhagwat and many other friends showed great sympathy towards the effort. To all these I owe grateful thanks.

6-4-1944 M.L.D.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

When G. D. H. Cole wrote "What Marx Really Meant," Marxists were quick to retort that it was in fact "What Cole Really Meant." I am told that in Reconsidering Gandhism, I have super-imposed my views on it. True, I am not so fortunate as to get even a negative endorsement from Gandhiji to the effect that "I have not misrepresented him at any place." Yet through the kind efforts of Sri Narhari Parikh and Sri Pyarelal I was able to meet Gandhiji and get many doubtful points clarified from him, and I can say with confidence that nowhere have I given an interpretation which I have reason to believe Gandhiji will not accept. True, there are still many points which need to be clarified and developed. I do hope, people with better access to Gandhiji will undertake the task.

Marxist critics have done me the honour of extensively reviewing the book. I in my turn have taken pains to meet their criticism in this edition. The most angry criticism has, however, come from the Technocrats. They believe that it is crazy to talk of chaining the machine when technology is taking such rapid strides; and in India where the standard of living is so poor, such an attitude, in their opinion, becomes criminal. In this edition I have brought in added evidence to show that, however we may dislike it, we will

have to choose between full technology and full employment.

I hope the addition of 16 pages will improve the reasoning and the validity of my interpretation of Gandhism.

20th June, 1945. M. L. D.

GANDHISM RECONSIDERED

IT is not the intention of this essay to ascribe any well knit system of economic thought to Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji is essentially a thinker and not a theoretician. One can descern a running thread in all his varied thinking on matters economic, but he has not bothered to press these thoughts into the straight jacket of a system or an 'ism.' Secondly, since he is more of a preacher than a professor, his exposition of all questions is in the language of the pulpit and not that of the class-room or the library. This has both an advantage and a disadvantage. The language is such that its content is instinctively grasped by the masses in India to whom any university jargon would be entirely incomprehensible. The educated elite, on the other hand, shrugs its shoulders at his foolhardy amateurism and condemns it as dangerous since it is so retrograde. Gandhiji's ideas have, therefore, evoked devotional adoration on the one hand, and angry condemnation on the other. The object of this essay is to show that there can be something more than these emotional reactions to his ideas, that they can be examined on the plane of scientific enquiry.

It is convenient to examine his ideas under five different headings :—

(1) Opposition to Capitalism;
(2) Opposition to the Machine;
(3) Neglect of sources of exploitation other than

the machine. (lacunæ in the Gandhian thought);

(4) Principle of Trusteeship;

(5) Economic structure of a non-violent Society.

1. Opposition to Capitalism :—Perhaps it will be universally accepted that Gandhiji has no admiration for the economic system that prevails to-day, and that he passionately desires to change it. He has shown his disapproval on many occasions in no uncertain terms. Poverty and unemployment of the vast masses of India are the constant themes of his speeches and writings. He has constantly appealed to the rich to renounce the privileges of property and ownership. He has asked even the Indian Princes to wash off the sin of their 'gigantic autocracy' and to divest themselves of powers "which no human being, conscious of his dignity, should possess." He has always claimed to be the champion of the *Daridranarayan*. At the Round Table Conference he said "The Congress represents in its essence the dumb and semi-starved millions scattered over the length and breadth of the land in its seven lakhs of villages. Every interest which is worthy of protection has to subserve to this interest and if there is genuine and real clash, I have no hesitation in saying that the Congress will sacrifice every interest for the sake of the interest of the dumb millions."

Economic equality is included in his thirteen—now fourteen—point constructive programme. If we accept Tawney's description of the capitalist society

as the 'religion of inequality,' Gandhiji cannot be regarded as its upholder. Writing about his constructive programme he made it very clear that 'the whole of this programme will however be a structure on sand if it is not built on the solid foundation of economic equality.' His views on private property further clarify his attitude towards the present economic order. Explaining the principle of Trusteeship in a later section, we have contended that it is negation of all known rights and privileges of private property. The A.I.S.A. and the A.I.V.I.A. run their respective industries on a non-profit basis. That, unlike a capitalist, he is guided in price policies not by consideration of larger consumption and higher profits but solely by the principle of decent living conditions for the producers, becomes evident from his insistence on the minimum wages for spinners in the A.I.S.A., in total disregard of its effect on the sales of Khaddar. In his propagation of Khaddar he has courageously resisted the acme of capitalist wisdom of 'buying the cheapest and selling the dearest!' Any one with respect for the capitalist norms of economic propriety and wisdom would not have dared to recommend to India so doggedly the adoption of the Charkha—perhaps the fittest emblem of uneconomic (!) technique.

One of the aims and objects of the Ahmedabad Majoor Mahajan, working under his inspiration, is the ultimate nationalisation of the textile industry.

It will be contended that Gandhiji's anti-capitalism arises not so much out of any superior values of social justice or hatred of exploitation as from his

mediaeval orthodoxy and abhorrence of the machine. Far from being progressive, therefore, it is retrograde. The evils of capitalism are not due to the machine; capitalism perverts into private profits the gains that the machine brings. Destroy the anti-social framework in which the machine operates to-day, and this earth will begin to flow with milk and honey. It is obviously very short-sighted to pour out the baby with the bath. To forgo the advantages which the machine can bring, is to return to barbarism. That may provide a source of joy to a mashochist like Gandhi; to people with a saner attitude to life, it does not constitute any pleasant prospect.

It is undeniable that Gandhiji's opposition to capitalism is not based on any *a priori* logic like that of the Marxists. He has no theory to offer regarding the interpretation of history from which to arrive at the inevitability of socialism. He has also not adopted any theory of value which can explain the accumulation of the 'surplus value.' But one may be permitted to hold concepts of social justice similar to those held by the Marxists without subscribing to the reasoning by which they arrive at it.

This, however, does not meet the charge of 'pouring out the baby with the bath.' Though it is undeniable that Gandhiji is a vehement critic of the machine, to say that his anti-capitalism is derived from his anti-machine ideology is untrue. For, whenever he has been compelled to accept the retention of machinery—e.g., a plant to manufacture the sewing-machine which has received his approval, or the rail-

ways—he has advocated its nationalisation. If he was against capitalism simply because in involves the use of the machine, he would not have objected to the continuation of capitalist enterprise in those machine industries which might become unavoidable even in the Charkha society. Even his non-mechanised industries are to run not for profit but for service. Machine or no machine there is no room for profit or exploitation in the Gandhian economy. He is opposed to capitalism because he does not subscribe to the capitalist code of justice. Many of its accepted norms do not fit into his picture of a just society. His anti-capitalism is thus independent of his opposition to the machine.

(2) Opposition to the Machine :—What about this anti-machine ideology? Is it merely a moral abhorrence and an instinctive revulsion of an orthodox Hindu to all this new-fangled modernism? Is it because he considers the industrial society of the Western type unethical in itself, irrespective of the exploitation on which it is based?

There have been, it is true, some utterances and writings of Gandhiji which smack of a purist's orthodoxy. The modern mind is often distrustful of radicalism born out of religious disposition and moral purism. It is probable that Gandhiji's first reaction to machinery was ethico-religious and not what many of us would like it to be, 'strictly economic.' The economist, however, need not necessarily shun the insight of a saint. It records soundings which he may well

examine, with a purely scientific mind. But in his later writings, one discovers an increasing reliance on perfectly rational and economic arguments against the excessive use of machinery. Let us see on what grounds Gandhiji denounces machinery.

It is necessary to point out in the first place that his opposition is neither indiscriminate nor total. Syt. Narhari Parikh has collected Gandhiji's writings on the subject in his book *Yantrani Maryada*—the limitations of machinery. As the title of the book very rightly suggests, what Gandhiji wants essentially is the regulation and not the abolition of machinery. It is possible to find in his earlier writings sentiments which suggest his irreconcilable and total opposition to machinery. For example, in his *Hind Swaraj* (1908) he writes "I can't remember a single merit of the machine, whereas I can write a whole book on its demerits." Further on he says, "Remember the basic point, Machinery is an evil, we shall destroy it gradually." But in his later writings his opposition is not so uncompromising and secondly, against one such occasion of unrelieved opposition or total rejection, one can cite several quotations where one finds that his opposition is not only discriminating, but is based on grounds of practical economic, rather than spiritual, considerations.

The following quotations from his writings will help us to deduce the grounds on which his opposition to machinery is based.

First we quote passages which show that Gandhiji is *not* against *all* machinery:

"It is not true that I desire the destruction of all machinery or that I am working in that direction."—*Young India*, 19-1-1921.

"Those who do not know have very much discredited me by saying that I am against machinery."—*Nava Jivan*, 20-4-1924.

"My object is not to destroy the machine but to impose limitations to it."—*Young India*, 13-11-1924.

"What I object to, is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such . . . I want to save time and labour not for a fraction of mankind, but for all."—*Young India*, 13-11-24.

"Are you against all machinery?"

"My answer is emphatically, No. But I am against its indiscriminate multiplication . . . Such machinery as saves individual labour and lightens the burden of millions of cottages, I should welcome."—*Young India*, 17-6-26.

"The village industry actively will protect any machinery which does not deprive masses of men opportunity to work, but which helps the individual and adds to his efficiency, and which a man can handle at will without being its slave."

"If we could have electricity in every village home, I shall not mind villagers plying their implements and tools with electricity."—*Harijan*, 22-6-1935.

The above quotations make it clear that Gandhiji is not against all machinery.

Below we give quotations which bring out his reasons for opposition to machinery.

"Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. To-day machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthrophy to save labour, but greed."—*Young India*, 13-11-24.

"I consider it a sin and injustice to use machinery for the purpose of concentrating power and riches in the hands of the few. To-day the machine is used in this way."—*Nava Jivan*, 20-9-1925.

"In a country where crores are without work, to use any power except that of man is to still further increase the unemployment."—*Harijan Bandhu*, 29-10-33.

"In a country where there are more men than can be given employment, it is injurious to use the machine."—*Harijan Bandhu*, 18-11-1934.

"Where crores of men are idle for want of work, what is the point in thinking about labour-saving machinery."—*Harijan Bandhu*, 19-5-1935.

"We should not substitute life-less machines for the living machines scattered over the seven lakhs villages of India. The machine is well used if it aids men's labour and simplifies it. To-day it is used to pour wealth in the pockets of the chosen few. Little attention is paid to crores of people from whom the machine snatches away their bread."—*Harijan Bandhu*, 15-9-1935.

"I have no objection if all things required by my country could be produced with the labour of 30,000 instead of that of 3 crores. But those three crores must not be rendered idle or unemployed."
—*Harijan Bandhu*, 27-2-1938.

It may be noted that Gandhiji's objection to the machine arises from two different sets of reasons. One is based on the evils arising out of the capitalist exploitation of the machine and the other on the evils of the industrial civilisation itself. The latter is the more fundamental of the two. The former is only a functonal disorder while the latter is organic. He is not only opposed to the manner in which the machine is utilised under the present economic order but also believes that its unrestrained use will not be compatible with his concept of a free and just society. It is this second belief that brings him the attribute of a quack and a reactionary.

Looking from another point of view, his objections could be classified as economic and sociological. Since both Gandhiji and the Socialists agree as to the evils of capitalist use of the machine, nothing more need be said on that point. It is the validity or otherwise of the second proposition viz: that an unlimited use of the machine is not compatible with human welfare conceived in its broadest terms, by which Gandhism must stand or fall. Let us, therefore, examine the two sets of objections, economic and sociological to the full use of machinery, without mixing up with them evils which are strictly due to the capitalist manner in which the machine is utilised to-day.

The economic objection.—In a nut-shell this can be expressed in the following proposition. Neither the increase in the standard of life nor the reduction in the hours of work, will be able to ensure the employment of the entire 'effective' population of a country, if no limit is placed on the use of the machine. In other words, we have to sacrifice either the full employment of machinery or the full employment of men. Let us see how far this objection is valid.

That, other things, remaining equal, utilisation of machinery will cause unemployment no one will dispute. But both the classical economists and the socialists point out that other things do not or need not remain equal. The classicists, for example, contend that the utilisation of the machine reduces the cost of production, which in its turn stimulates consumption, giving rise to increased demand, increased production and therefore increased employment. Thus the reduction in employment in an industry where a new or a better machine is installed will be more than compensated for by a rise in employment in industries in general. Statistical record, however, shows that the growth of employment does not keep pace with the growth of industries. In the first stage of growth after the Industrial Revolution new production did employ those thrown out from the old. That was the stage in which reduction in cost was achieved by the economies of large-scale production, i.e., by extensification. But now a stage has arrived when industries seek new economies mainly in internal organization often achieved by increasing mechanization. Hence production in-

creases without a corresponding increase in employment.

The Socialists maintain, on the other hand, that there is so much poverty and starvation at one end and so much sweatening and over-work at the other, that it is preposterous to entertain the fear of over-production leading to unemployment. Why can we not have a perpetually rising standard of life and a perpetual shortening of the hours of work?

Carried to its logical extreme the question ceases to be economic and assumes a partly philosophical and sociological significance. How much of material goods a man may possess and why should not every man possess five motor cars, three aeroplanes and half a dozen luxury cruisers are not strictly economic questions. Similarly if it is suggested that the hours of work may be reduced to one or less than one, the objection that so much leisure will demoralise society is not an economic one.

We do not wish to enter into discussion over these issues. But a few statistics from the occupational distribution of the Indian population (1931 Census) are given below to bring out the relation between employment and production.

The total population of India	...	352·83	million
,, ,, of British India	...	271·52	,,
The number of persons occupied	...	168·83	,,
Leaving aside the number whose occupations were subsidiary we get the number	...	153·92	,,
Out of this Agriculture absorbed	...	103·29	,,
Minerals	...	·34	,,

Industry	15·35	million
Trade	7·91	,,
Transport	2·34	,,
Public administration and Liberal arts	4·15	,,
Domestic Service	10·9	,,
Insufficiently described ...	7·78	,,
Unproductive	1·63	,,
Living on their Incomes ...	·22	,,
Total...	153·92	,,

Out of the population of 353 million, approximately 170 million belonged to the working age-group, i.e., of 15 to 55. It should be the aim of any economic order to provide employment to this entire effective section of the population.

The number of people fully and productively employed according to 1931 Census, is less than 15 crores. That is, there are at least 2 crores of totally unemployed persons in India. But there is a much larger number of under or superfluously employed.[1] Agriculture is its best illustration. Agriculture today absorbs the largest percentage, 72% of this employed section, employing as many as 103 million people. Even the most casual student of Indian economics knows that a large part of this is entirely superfluous. We have in India, in round figures, 300 million acres of land available for cultivation. On any estimate not more than 50 million people are required for the most efficient cultivation of this land under the system of

[1] Two facts may be noted in this connection. Firstly, the proportion of actual workers per 1,000 of the population, between the ages of 15 and 60 years, is continuously falling, from 843 in 1911 to 749 in 1931. Secondly, there were in 1931, 19.5 crores of persons between the ages of 15 to 60, but the number of actual workers was only 14.69 crores. Nearly 5 crores of persons, mostly females, were not "gainfully occupied".

peasant proprietorship. If we resort to mechanised collective agriculture, the number of people who could be usefully employed would be smaller still. Any way, under Swaraj Government we will have to provide non-agricultural employment to at least 70 million (50 million superfluous on land plus 20 totally unemployed) more people. It may also be remembered that during the decade 1930-40 there has been an addition to this working section of at least 20 million people.[1]

The remedy promptly suggested is Industrialization. Now our contention is that industrialization based on the factory system—large-scale production by machines—will not be able to absorb this surplus, inspite of socialisation of the factories with the consequent increase in the standard of life and reduction in the hours of work.

This contention was keenly resisted by critics and reviewers, especially those of Marxist persuasion. "One is surprised" runs the criticism, "to find an academic

---

1 "Assuming the proportion of workers to the total population to be 40 to 45 per hundred and assuming that an annual growth of 5 millions is maintained, it will be seen that an occupational plan must, to prevent further pressure on land, draw into manufacture and other trades at least 2 million workers per year. If the object is to reduce the proportion of the population working on land, the task is still more formidable."

Principles of Economic Planning: Dr. P. S. Loknathan.

"Any increase in large-scale production is not likely to absorb even the annual increases in the working population by the growth of numbers. The total number of people employed in large-scale establishments in India was less than 2 millions in 1939. If the populatoin goes on increasing at the present rate, that is, about 5 millions per year, what a colossal task it would be even to absorb the surplus into industry even if we plan for a rapid industrialization! Still less will such industrial production absorb the present surplus agricultural population. The balance cannot be absorbed except by developing a large number of small-scale and medium-scale industries. It means the visualization of a new economic order in which we have variegated production through units considered perhaps too small in the industrially advanced countries, but which will be nearer the optimum size in our country, in view of the relative abundance of labour and the relative scarcity of capital."

Our Economic Problem: Wadia and Merchant.

economist putting forward the patently unsound argument that industrialism necessarily leads to unemployment, so that in order to provide work for all, we must keep our economy backward. Under a centralised socialist system there would be no need for any shortage of employment for generations." Another feels that "the prejudice seems to arise from a failure imaginatively to grasp the degree in which the standard of life can be and needs to be improved. The author has in mind a population as backward and a market as limited as we have now. But a great expansion of education is just ahead; the whole country must be re-housed in modern style; millions of acres of barren land must be reclaimed and irrigated; there is no end in sight to what we must do. It is absurd to speak of lack of employment." Another critic observes "Gandhism dreads the 'onslaught of technology' because it creates unemployment. Technology refers to the application of science to production with a view to making human labour both more effective and less onerous. It means an increase in the productive powers of mankind, and is unwelcome only to an economy of scarcity. Both capitalism and Gandhism are opposed to technological progress for this reason, Gandhism because it dislikes material abuandance, capitalism because abundance destroys profits. Socialism, on the contrary, stands for an economy of abundance and has no need to curtail production in order to support a sagging rate of profit, no need, therefore, to enforce idleness with loss of earnings on any section of the people. Unemployment

is not a consequence of the machine. It arises from the incapacity of capitalism to use the productive powers of society to the full. It disappears when the fetters on these powers are removed under a socialist organization of production. Technological progress under socialism is no longer a thing to be dreaded but a boon. Statistics of diminishing or restricted employment furnished by capitalist experience do not disprove this point."

It will be noted that both the Marxist and the capitalist economists bank, no doubt from different points of view, on a perpetual increase in production. But whereas the Capitalist is unable to realise it because of "the sagging rates of profit" and its policy of denial of purchasing power to the masses; the Marxist thinks that under the socialised organisation of production there will be no impediment left for the continued increase in production. The point that is common to both is that both consider an increasing multiplication of goods as a boon. This involves a fundamental question of values and a philosophy of life and I have no desire to be sidetracked into its discussion. I wish merely to state that Gandhiji and several renowned and influential thinkers from the West along with him, while not advocating an economy of scarcity or enforced poverty, believe that after the need for a perfectly decent standard of living is provided to every individual, the social effort should be diverted from prouction of goods towards cultural channels. In their scheme of things, therefore, a stage is reached—may be, it is far off in India—when further increase in pro-

duction may not be the best way of providing employment to men. Technology will have done its work when it succeeds in providing to an equalitarian society a sufficient quantity of goods for a dignified standard of living. Any further pursuit of labour-saving devices will be left to those who value machines more than man.

I, however, wish to examine more closely the argument that mechanization does not create unempolyment or that, even if it does, "in the long run it creates more employment than it destroys, reducing costs and prices and releasing money and labour for other forms of production." Is this in-the-long-run hope confined to text-books on economics or is it realised in the actual economy of the various industrialised countries of the world? The table below gives the total number of persons "Gainfully Occupied" and the percentage of persons occupied in industry to the total number of persons "Gainfully Occupied" in some of

Country & year to which the figures relate.	Total population gainfully occupied.	Total population so occupied in Industry.	The percentage of the Industrial Population to the total working population.
U. S. A.	Lakhs	Lakhs	
1910	328	107	27.9
1920	416	128	30.8
1930	488	141	28.9
ENGLAND & WALES			
1911	163	69	42.1
1921	172	55	32.3
1931	189	60	31.7
GERMANY			
1925	320	122	38.1
1933	323	117	36.2
JAPAN			
1920	273	53	19.4
1930	292	53	18.1
CANADA			
1921	32	8	23.8
1931	39	7	17.3

the highly industrialised countries between 1920 and 1930.[1]

The experience of every country is unanimous and shows that with the increasing industrialization, the percentage of population employed in industries instead of increasing, shows a tendency to decline. Besides, the figures are only of gainfully occupied persons and give us no idea of the prevalent unemployment. Commenting on this Dr. Ghate observes, "The table shows that in most of these countries there is a tendency for the proportion of industrial workers per 1000 of the total occupied population to decline. Even assuming that Indian industries have not yet reached the maximum limit of expansion, there is no ground to believe that the forces which tend to lower the proportion of industrial workers in other countries, will not, after a certain stage of development, begin to operate in India also."

Another line of explaining away the disconcerting evidence is to dismiss it as a mere "capitalist experience" and to pin a naive faith in "the socialised organisation of production." What does the "socialist experience" tell us? Dr. Loknathan (I hope he will not be dismissed as a "bourgeois economist") commenting on the effect of industrialization on employment in the U.S.S.R. points out that "between 1928 and 1934 about 18 million workers were transferred to urban employment and yet the percentage of rural population remained 73.5 per cent. showing that the pace of industrialization had just kept pace with the natural

1 Changes In The Occupational Distribution Of The Population: B. G. Ghate, Government of India Press.

increase in the population. All that industrialization achieved was to maintain this increase in population without a decline in their standard of living but rather with some increase in it."

Instead of bluntly asserting that "unemployment is not the consequence of the machine," Dr. Loknathan thinks it necessary to consider "the right degree of capital intensification (mechanization) which would achieve the growth of national income without causing technological unemployment." He further observes that it is at this stage that the conflict between the employment of the huge labour force and the introduction of machinery arises."

I do not wish to give the impression that Dr. Loknathan upholds the Gandhian doctrine of chaining the machine, or, advocates what he sarcastically calls "an idyllic picture of a pre-mechanical age." All that I wish to suggest is that unlike the technology worshipers, both Marxist and capitalist, thinking of nothing but production of goods and oblivious to all its economic and sociological consequences, Dr. Loknathan admits the necessity of "judiciously adjusting the rate of modernization." He is fully aware of "the same old question of machine versus man, of the effect upon employment of the introduction of machinery and of the impact of scientific innovation upon the prevalent pattern of industrial and occupational organization" and of "the task of industrial technique to reconcile the conflict between full employment and higher per capita output." Dr. Loknathan, of course, does not advocate "reversion to crude technology" but sounds

a warning that "we shall not secure the maximum economy in the use of our capital resources or get the maximum output if we use very advanced technological processes requiring costly machinery, while simultaneously there is a large fund of unemployed labour power." After a thorough discussion of the problem he suggests a guiding principle for the Planning Authority. He suggests that "the optimum 'roundaboutness' or 'technological time-preference'—which is a technical way of referring to mechanization—should be such that there is neither surplus nor shortage of man power."

With the acceptance of this principle, the strictly economic objection to the machine would disappear. For, as we have pointed out before, the major economic objection to the machine is that it creates unemployment. If the necessity of providing full employment before further mechanization is introduced is accepted, Gandhism gains its point. The only difference then left is that whereas Dr. Loknathan has faith in "the historical induction that in the long run mechanization creates more employment than it destroys," the historical evidence cited above does not permit Gandhism to entertain that faith. It feels that if Imperialism, manufacture of armaments and wars are eschewed, the conflict between full employment and full technology will be unavoidable. But the feelings of neither are relevant to the issue; facts alone will ultimately decide the issue of how much of mechanization has to be introduced consistent with the imperative need of providing full employment.

Let us for a moment revert to the statistics of employment in India. At present, out of 15.35 million people industrially employed, only 3.5 million are employed in factories using mechanical power. As we know, after the War of 1914 there has been a rapid development of factory industries in India. Textile and Iron and Steel industries are already full grown. The production of cloth has increased by 400% and that of iron and steel by 300%. During this period the Sugar industry was born and is already displaying symptoms of flabbiness. The Cement industry is also full grown. Paper and Chemical industries are fast developing. Between 1911 and 1936 the number of factories increased from 2,700 to 9,300, yet during these 30 years, the percentage of industrially occupied people—factory and non-factory—to the total working population fell from 11 to 9.6* The above statistics show that the increasing production is not necessarily accompanied by an increased employment. In technical language the employment index has not been able to keep pace with the production index. Thanks to

	1911	1921	1931	1941	per cent variation 1911-1931
Population (in millions)	315	319	353	389	+ 12.1
Working Population (in millions) ...	149	146	154	170*	+ 14.0
Persons employed in Industry (in millions)	17.5	16.7	15.3	16.3*	— 12.6
Percentage of workers in Industry to working population	11.0	11.0	10.5	9.6	— 9.1
Percentage of workers in Industry to total population	5.5	4.9	4.3	4.2	— 21.8

*Estimates.

"Food Planning for 400 million" by Radha Kamal Mukerji.

* Dr. Ghate attributes this decline "to the changes in classification, to a large increase in the Insufficietnly described Occupations, and also, to the changes in the method of recording subsidiary occupations.

technology, we require proportionately fewer men to produce additional wealth.

The Report of the Bombay Economic and Industrial Survey Committee supports this view. It observes, "All the same it is a matter deserving serious attention that in what is considered to be the most industrial province of India, the population engaged in industrial occupation appears to have fallen both absolutely and relatively to other occupations." It then goes on to make a very pertinent remark: "Thus the industrial evolution and modernization of the Province has seen the agricultural community suffering in two ways, namely, increasing pressure on land and increase in under-employment due to loss of subsidiary occupations. The Report bears signatures of the leading economist, Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao and the industrial magnate, Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas.

The conclusion is further supported (though partially) by Dr. Ghate, in his *Changes in the Occupational Distribution of the Population.* He says, "It is thus clear that the popular belief that industrialization will continue to absorb an indefinitely large number of people is completely unfounded... It is probable that the proportion of industrial workers to the total population will never rise to such an extent as to absorb the whole of the increases in population." He, however, believes that "the gap between the growth of population on the one hand and the absence of a correspondingly a large increase in Agricultural (the problem is to decrease the population engaged in agriculture) and Industrial occupations on the other has, to a

large extent, been made up by the increase in the distributional and other Services." It is not possible to share Dr. Ghate's confidence in this respect, for as Dr. Loknathan points out "even in the distributive and other tertiary industries, there is in India a lot of what Joan Robinson calls "disguised" unemployment. Abundant evidence for this view is to be found in the reports on the marketing of agricultural commodities in India."

The Tata-Birla Plan of Economic Development of India, however, though accepting the necessity of "comparatively low ratio of capital intensification i.e., a smaller proportion of capital per worker . . . and the fullest possible development of small-scale and cottage industries," takes a rather facile view of the problem of employment. It has further accepted the obligation to provide full employment to the people. Here is its picture of the distribution of the working population according to the principal occupations in 1962 and its comparison with that in 1931.

The Plan thus solves the problem of Full Employment, but it does so by making several misleading as-

OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION, 1931 & 1962.

(in millions)

	1931	1962
Agriculture	106·3	129·7
Industry	22·1*	57·9
Services**	19·2	34·7
Total working population	147·6	222·3
Total population	338·1	494·0

* This figure for inexplicable reasons *wrongly* includes persons in "Insufficiently described occupations", numbering 7-8 millions.

** Includes population enganged in Trade, Transport, Public Administration and Liberal Arts, Unproductive Labour and persons living on their income.

sumptions. Firstly, it assumes that in 1962, the proportion of working population to the total population will be the same (45%) as in 1931. In a poor country like India, where even young children have to be employed to make both ends meet, it is not unreasonable to assume that everyone between the age of 15-60 will need work and will desire to be *gainfully* employed. On the present basis of age composition in India—with the improvement in the standard of living the percentage is likely to increase, further aggravating the problem—out of 494 million people in 1962, 275 million will fall within the age group of 15-60; and will need employment. The Plan provides for the employment of only 222 million persons.

There is another serious flaw in the calculation. It allots 130 million people to Agriculture, 24 million more than are engaged in it to-day. Now industrialization was recommended to us as a measure for relieving the pressure of population on agriculture. The inability of industrialization to relieve this pressure or even absorb the natural increase in population, as was accomplished in Russia, could not have been more patently exposed. The eight doyens of Industries, not only do not promise any such relief, they want Agriculture to employ 24 million more men. Unlike industries, the available supply of land is fairly limited, and so is its capacity to provide useful employment to the people. Besides, if we adopt mechanised collective farming, the number of people who can be gainfully employed on land will be further reduced. We have

roughly estimated that Agriculture in India will provide useful employment to not more than 60 million people. The Plan wants to push 130 million people on Agriculture,—one person to every 3 acres of land.

Thirdly, contrary to all previous experience in this country and in others, the Plan hopes that the Industry will employ (in 1962) 44 million more people. As pointed out before, inspite of the fairly rapid industrialization in India between 1914 and 1941, the percentage of population engaged in industrial occupation to the working population and to the total population has fallen. The figures given under this category are a conscious or unconscious over-estimate. The Table below clearly brings this out.

	1911	1921	1931	1941	1962*
Persons employed in Industry (in millions)	17·5	15·7	15·3	16·3	57·9
Percentage of workers in Industry to working population	11·0	11·0	10·5	9·6	26·0

The conclusion that emerges from these calculations is that, if you do not wish to be faced with "surplus of man-power," the "optimum round-aboutness" or "technological time-preference" and "the ratio of capital to net product" will have to be much lower than what the Plan presumes. If this is "reversion to

* Plan's Estimate.

crude technology," whether the Planners like it or not, they will have to take recourse to it.

Before concluding this section, we may examine some further criticism of the Gandhian Economic thought. The accusation that "Gandhi is an agent of the capitalist and his effort is to plan for the power, and jobs and markets of the feudal bourgeois ruling class" has a value only as a museum specimen of an unabashed Marxist orthodoxy and can, therefore, be safely ignored. But the criticism that "Gandhism wants to revert to the stage of development which existed prior to the rise of capitalism; and that it is an attempt to drag the efficiency of human labour to primitive standards by refusing to take the help of science," deserves more attention and needs refutation. When the critics refer to the efficiency of human labour they really mean the efficiency of the machine. Otherwise it is difficult to understand such a charge levied against the originator of the Basic (Wardha) Scheme of Education with all its emphasis on education through craft. All that Gandhism advocates is a restraint on the limitless multiplication of goods. It does not advocate enforced poverty, nor does it refuse to take the help of science. The experiments going on at the All India Village Industries Centre at Wardha should dispel any such misconception. Because he warns us against the mad pursuit of material plently and the evils of centralised mass production, it is illogical to conclude that he stands for the other extreme of scarcity and poverty or that he wants to revert to a pre-mechanical age. As early as 1921, he has said that

"he would favour the use of the most elaborate machinery if thereby India's pauperism and the resulting idleness be avoided" (*Young India*, 3-11-1921). In his *Cent-percent Swadeshi or the Economics of Village Industries* he has stated that "he would prize every invention of science made for the benefit of all . . . The heavy machinery for work of public utility which cannot be undertaken by human labour, has its inevitable place, but all that will be owned by the State and used entirely for the benefit of the people." His willingness to have "electricity in every village home" and "to see villagers plying their instruments and tools with the help of the electricity" should once for all acquit him from the charge of "attempting to drag the efficiency of human labour to primitive standards by refusing to take the help of science."

If we are pleading for the sacrifice of all the plenty and the relief that the machine brings to man, we do so only when the machine transgresses its purposes and leaves the man without work and hungry. For the millions of men without work, unless they perfer to live on charity, the machine is no blessing, because being without work, they will have no honourable way left of sharing the plenty that the machine will bring. It is but right that the machine should make way for them. From a purely technological point of view, typical of a capitalist or a war-faring State, such a replacement of the machine by man may be considered retrograde; but if human welfare is the criterion, and if such replacement leads to the employment of

the unemployed, it will indicate a more progressive outlook on human society.

Socialization of instruments of production is no magic. Technology has undergone a revolution undreamt of by Marx. Socialization can, under proper management, prevent economic exploitation and will have to be adopted by the Gandhian thinkers if they would remain true to Gandhi. But socialization cannot create employment; the two palliatives, reduction of hours of work and increase in the standard of life will be found inadequate for securing full employment. There is nothing humiliating in the admission. New ills require new remedies. Socialization is no specific against the onslaught of technology. That onslaught may compel us to consider a voluntary, rational and enlightened renunciation of the machine. To-day it is too much of a good thing. Human ingenuity will have to find out ways and means of synthesising the major conflict of the 20th century, that between man and the machine. Till that is done, machine will have to yield place to man. Unfortunately a large number of persons have not yet been able to out-live their 19th century ideas. They still consider human progress to be synonymous with machinery, and all contrary beliefs as anti-deluvial if not reactionary.

Sociological objections : Let us now turn to certain non-economic considerations. The question of the psychological effect of machinery on the worker and its sociological effect on society is more difficult because it is not capable of categorial or statistical for-

mulation. Here is what Marx, who was by no means a machine-baiter, has to say on the question.

"If it develops a one-sided speciality into periection at the expense of man's working capacity as a whole, it also begins to make speciality of the absence of all development. The value of labour falls . . ." And further . . .

"Made now unfit in his natural capacities to make anything independently, the manufacturing labourer develops a productive activity as a mere appendage of the workshop." In our zeal to enrich the total "productive power, each labourer must be made poor in individual productive power."

The sociological consequences of the machine are much too complex to admit of any simple formulation. But that the coming of the machine has had a profound influence on the organised life of the people, is a fact which is not in dispute. Literary artists have brought it out as effectively as social scientists. How the machine has disintegrated the lives of the people could not have been better described than has been done by the talented authors of 'Grapes of Wrath,' 'How Green was my Valley' and 'After Many a Summer' or by the master comedian Charlie Chaplin through his film 'Modern Times.' The scientists are also becoming increasingly aware of the problems created by the impact of machinery on the various sectors of our social existence.

Professor Karl Mannheim in his *Man and Society* makes a valuable contribution to the problem of the effect of industrialization on social behaviour. He

holds that "increasing industrialization implies functional rationality, i.e., the organisation of the activity of the members of society with reference to objective ends. It does not to the same extent promote 'substantial rationality,' i.e., the capacity to act intelligently in a given situation on the basis of one's own insight into the inter-relation of events." He further holds that functional rationalization has "a paralysing effect on the capacity for rational judgment."

The use of highly developed machines creates such divisions of functions in the processes of production that it assigns to one small group, tasks which require certain acts of thinking, deciding and co-ordination; while "a vast bulk of producers have to perform mechanical and monotonous jobs and who can adjust themselves to their position only by renouncing all insight or initiative."

I am tempted to quote in extenso a whole paragraph wherein he argues this point.

"The fact that in a functionally rationalised society the thinking out of a complex series of actions is confined to a few organisers, assures these men a key position in society. A few people can see things more and more clearly over an ever-widening field, while the average man's capacity for rational judgment steadily declines, once he has turned over to the organiser the responsibility for making decisions. In modern society not only is the ownership of the means of production concentrated in few hands, but as we have just shown, there are far fewer positions from which the major structural connections between different

activities can be perceived, and fewer men can reach these vantage points."

The social maladjustments caused by the advent of the machine in India are well-known to all students of India's social history. The agrarian-cum-handicraft economy of India gave her a balanced social and economic life. The decay of indigenous industries brought about by the coming of the machine—or machine-made goods—from the West is mainly responsible both for the occupational disequilibrium among the population and the isolation of the rural areas, the root causes of the poverty and ignorance of our masses. The cities of modern India owe their birth and growth to the trade in foreign manufactured goods and the growth of factory industry in India itself. The effect of such concentration of productive power, wealth, population and intelligentsia on the welfare of the people of India as a whole needs a thorough sociological investigation.

The point is that in the balance-sheet of good and evil resulting from the machine, the entries should not be only under the head 'economic.' Social institutions must be examined from a much wider point of view. The ease and rapidity with which the machine has enabled us to bring out large quantities of goods need not hustle us into the conclusion that the machine has been an unmixed blessing. It is the totality of social welfare which must determine the merit of an institution. The economic—speed and quantities of production—criterion is a typically capitalist one. Unfortunately, due to an assimilation of a century, it has

infected even the socialist thought. The latter has discarded institution of capitalism but not fully as yet, all its values.

(3) **Neglect of exploitation through Other Economic Evils**:—But it will be a great mistake to believe that all exploitation will cease, the moment we do away with the machine. There are evils in our economic system which are wholly independent of the machine. As some one has said 'exploitation may begin with the Rickshaw and vanish with the air plane economy.' It appears that the Gandhian economists have not given as much thought to them as they have done to the condemnation of the machne. Much of the rural exploitation to-day goes on without the machine having anything to do with it. For example, farmers suffer a devastating drain from the manner in which prices of agricultural commodities are determined. The Gandhian economists have not probed into the mystery of the iniquitous price mechanism. The absence of any official view on such vital sources of economic drain is interpreted and represented as an absence of any objection to the evil itself. It is necessary, in order to enlist the intellectual allegiance of a large number of people, to present a complete critique of the existing system and an adequate picture of the future. In this connection the work done by the socialist thinkers will prove very useful.

It is contended that since these problems are of no immediate import, Gandhiji does not like to waste thought on them. But such a defence is hardly valid, for though the closing of Cotton Mills and their

substitution by the Charkha is a distant prospect, yet Gandhiji has written about it on several occasions. It is further contended that as the solution of these problems is inconceivable till the acquisition of political power, discussion about them is an idle and futile pastime. To many such an attitude appears as an indication of mental lethargy if not a proof of deliberate evasion. Further, to seek solution through State action is hardly consistent with Gandhian non-violence.

(4) The Principle of Trusteeship :—Here is another of Gandhiji's principles which has a vital bearing on the economic arrangement of society. From the times of Rig Veda in India and Plato in European thought, ownership of wealth has been a subject-matter of profound thinking. With the development of Society there have been revolutionary changes in the norms and values associated with the function of ownership, and the rights, privileges, duties and the status of an owner of wealth. The advent of capitalism introduced one such revolutionary change in our concepts regarding wealth. It is now widely accepted that whatever wonders may have been achieved in the field of production by the new position assigned to wealth in social evaluation, it created several phenomena of social injustice like glaring economic inequalities, poverty, unemployment, insecurity and a class of privileged persons enjoying power and prestige entirely out of proportion to the social functions it performed.

The Socialist thought exposed much of the injustice which in due course was receiving the imprimatur

of law and ethics of an acquisitive society. Proudhon started by saying that 'all property was theft' and it was left to the penetrating genius of Karl Marx to suggest an institutional structure of an egalitarian society in which property (instruments of production) and therefore the whole economic structure was to be socialised. The progressive thought of the 19th and 20th century accepted the analysis as correct and is increasingly becoming inclined to accept the remedy, at least in its broad outlines. The recurrent economic crises and their companions, the total wars of the 20th century, shook off the last vestige of faith in the virtues of the Capitalist assignment of wealth. The marvels in production achieved by Soviet Russia gained numerous converts to socialist economics. Thus the radical intellectuals were settling down and beginning to feel comfortable in the thought of the new panacea.

At a time like this when Gandhiji came out with his principle of trusteeship, smacking so much of feudal revivalism, he could persuade few intellectuals to listen to him. The religious and moral fervour with which he propagated the idea, however, did make a great impression on the Indian mass mind which had not yet lost its susceptibility to such an appeal. But the University educated intellectuals, and especially those who had arrived at Marxism after bitter disillusionment, considered the Mahatma as a quack at best, with the sincerity of a zealous social reformer.

Like all new ideas, the theory of Trusteeship was vague in the beginning. After twenty years of attack and inquiry it has now taken a more concrete shape

and it is possible to examine it from various aspects. Our first task should be to examine its content, i.e., the rights, privileges and functions of a Trustee. How far, if at all, does he differ from a capitalist owner? What is the essential difference between trust ownership and socialised ownership? These are some of the questions that must be answered in order to clarify our ideas of the principle of Trusteeship.

The essence of capitalist ownership is that subject to the State laws of taxation, the owner retains all the profits of his enterprise. The owner can undertake almost any enterprise he likes, no matter whether it constitutes a social necessity or is conducive to social welfare. To give one extreme example, he may manufacture poison gas if it pays him to do so purely from the monetary point of view. Thirdly, in the management of economic affairs he possesses what is called 'freedom of contract,' a little modified, may be, by labour legislation. That is to say, he can employ a man and pay him a wage determined by the so-called laws of demand and supply which are invested with almost a divine immutability and justice of the economists of capitalism. But the wage so given may have no relevance either to the merit of the employee or his need. The result is well known. At the one end we get a poverty-stricken proletariat in perpetual fear of unemployment and economic insecurity, and, at the other, the rich few wallowing in wealth. With the economic position go social status and political power. Such a lop-sided arrangement gives rise to recurrent crises, imperialism and war.

The socialist remedy to the above ills is the abolition of private property and socialisation of all instruments of production. The entire economic life of the country will be planned. Production will be guided by social necessity and not private profit, class distinctions will be abolished and economic equality will be the ruling principle. In the process of production there will be no room for exploitation. It is generally admitted that these principles are inspired by high ideals of social justice and their workability is also fairly established by the Soviet experiment. Yet none but the blind devotee will deny that the scheme is not free from objections and difficulties both on the score of theroy and practice. It is important to remember this because critics are apt to insist on perfection, even in the smallest detail, while examining any suggestion which is new, particularly if they happen to be already prejudiced against it. New ideas must be first examined in their broad outlines. If something worth while is discovered in them, then one must help in perfecting the details and not seek to wreck them merely because they happen to be a little vague.

With a clearer conception of capitalist and socialist ownership we shall be better equipped to appraise Gandhiji's idea of trust ownership. A person must consider himself a trustee of all wealth which he collects. He will be permitted to retain a small percentage of this for his personal use. The manner and the purpose for which the rest will be used will be determined by social necessity. What wealth or income he retains for himself does not depend on his own sweet will. The

maximum personal income is limited to twelve times the minimum. This method of fixing the limit is more scientific than absolute fixing inasmuch as the maximum can vary with the economic conditions in the country.

Before further clarifying the concept of trusteeship, let us see where the above enunciation leads us. Firstly, unlike the capitalist owner, the trustee has no right to use or misuse his wealth as he likes. The only portion to whose free use he is entitled, is the one which is necessary for his own existence, this maximum being determined not by himself but by the State. Under a socialist dispensation his entire capital will be confiscated. Under both the schemes the underlying idea is that property, that is, the instruments of production, should not belong to, and its use must not be under the control of, any individual. More positively its use should be determined by social necessity and its management must be in keeping with the egalitarian ideas of social justice. It may be repeated that by confining the inequality within the narrow range of 1 to 12, the Gandhian concept definitely subscribes to the egalitarian idea of social justice. In the Soviet Union, according to Burnham, "the upper 11% to 12% of the Soviet population receives approximately 50% of the national income."*

In the last analysis, for all practical purposes the concept of trust ownership is not very different from that of socialised ownership. In neither case can the ownership be exploited for private benefit. In neither

* See "Managerial Revolution."

case will its direction and management depend on the whims and interests of the trustee or the manager. Both will be controlled in the interest of Society. When we look into the schedules of the rights and obligations of the trustee, we find that he very much resembles the manager of a socialised farm or factory, both in the matter of personal gain—remuneration—and freedom in the working of the plant.

Having seen the points of similarity between the content and concept of trust property and socialised property, let us see where the difference lies. The trustee is a self-appointed manager. Under the Gandhian scheme the former owner is converted into a trustee irrespective of his ability as a manager. In a socialist revolution, the best he may expect is a concentration camp. The manager will be appointed on merit and all former titles to ownership will be considered as evidence of social sin rather than qualifications for managership. Here is a difference which is very germane to the technique of social change in the two philosophies. No useful purpose will be served by dismissing the one as 'Utopian if not reactionary' and other as 'brutal.' Without some amount of intellectual de-conditioning a dispassionate evaluation of the two methods is not possible. All our knowledge of the sociology of revolution will have to be requisitioned for the purpose of evaluation.

It may be suggested that Gandhiji's choice of the principle of trusteeship was determined not so much by its economic implications as by his method of bringing about a social change. Consistent with his method

of non-violence, he must give a chance to the wrong-doer to improve before he is asked to quit or put in a concentration camp. Gandhiji has made no secret of his strong disapproval of all exploitation by zamindars and capitalists. Angered by their misbehaviour we at once think of liquidating them. But according to the non-violent technique we miss a step. Effort is to be made to do away with the wrong before we do away with the wrong-doer. Gandhiji, therefore, pleads and argues with the zamindars and capitalists voluntarily to submit themselves to the discipline and restraints of trusteeship. Show them the right course. Impress upon them the justice of your scheme. Give them a chance to mend their way. If that succeeds evil will be ended and we will have gained a valuable citizen. Negatively there will be one less enemy. The technique which announces *a priori* expropriation invites a counter-revolution. The experience of all attempted revolutions shows that immensely more difficult than the *coup-d'-etat* is the problem of resisting counter-revolutionary sabotage and intervention. The non-violent revolution is brought about in a more favourable atmosphere. It does not throw up hatred and violence which may undo the achievements of the revolution. With this technique therefore, the work of post-revolution reconstruction will be easier. We may need fewer concentration camps and fewer mass treason trials. It is a method of change which may be given a fair trial. But chances are we may not succeed. Even then, nothing would be lost. The trustee will have to be deposed, because our non-

violence does not mean toleration of an evil. In conformity with the Gandhian method even this deposition will be enforced as far as possible with the sanction of the community concerned and not that of the State. That the alternative method of immediate suppression does not achieve quicker results is patently demonstrated by the socialist experiment in the U.S.S.R., where sabotage and treason were causing constant troubles as late as 1939, two decades after the revolution.

Examining this question of State sanction versus communal sanction, it may be suggested that Gandhiji's preference for the latter arises logically from the application of the non-violent technique. In this connection, Gandhiji's position is more like that of anarchists, with a distrust of all constituted authority. To the usual argument that this involves a confusion between the immediate and the ultimate, that the State can wither away but slowly, and that it is sheer irresponsible romanticism to do away with its sanction from the very start, Gandhiji's reply will be that since in a non-violent revolution power is not 'seized' by but gradually accrues to the people, there will be no need for the transitional period of dictatorship, for by the time the revolution has run the last lap, the community will have gathered considerable strength for the enforcement of sanctions. The non-violent technique permits the fruit (new order) to ripen on the tree itself, while if you pluck the fruit when it is yet raw you will have to keep it in artificial heat (of State sanctions). To change the metaphor, it does not in-

volve any mopping up process and the work of reconstruction can start at once. The post-revolutionary society will be in a much more advanced state than the one which may confront us after a revolutionary *coup-d'-etat.* Since power is not 'captured', the revolutionary achievement does not need to be 'preserved' from foreign or counter-revolutionary intervention.

One may or may not believe in the efficiency or practicability of this method of bringing about revolutionary change, but one can understand why in the Gandhian scheme of society there is no reliance on the power and authority of the State for ushering changes or for preserving the New Order.

The principle of Trusteeship has been subjected to much misconceived criticism. It has been peremptorily described as a "makeshift", as an "eye-wash", as "a shelter for the rich", and as "merely appealing to the more fortunate ones to show a little more charity." And here is a typical Marxist appraisal of the doctrine: "The division of society into the property-owning and the property-less classes, which is the characteristic of capitalism, is sought to be retained in Gandhism also. The only difference in Gandhism is that the erstwhile capitalist, property-owning class will consider itself trustee on behalf of the proletariat. The change is purely in the subjective sphere, the objective conditions of production will continue by remaining as they were in capitalism. Production will continue by unplanned private competition among the individual trustees. These conditions of production have a compelling logic of their own which will lead to the same contra-

dictions as are witnessed under capitalism to-day. The class appropriation of surplus value, which trust production will continue in a pious guise, will mean larger and larger accumulations of the capital on the one hand and pauperization of the masses on the other ....These evils cannot be banished by wishing a change in the hearts and minds of the owners of property."

Whether it is the association of ideas around the word Trusteeship or a deliberate refusal to understand the principle, that is responsible for these misconceptions it is difficult to say. Whatever it may be, I shall content myself with restating, at the cost of repetition, the basic principles of the doctrine.

1. The erstwhile capitalist is reduced to the status of a manager of the trust property. But the change is not confined to the name. The schedule of rights, privileges and obligations of the two is basically different. The capitalist, instead of being sent to the concentration camp as under the socialist dispensation, is given an opportunity of conforming to the ethics of the new society. It is a misnomer to call the class of trustees the property-owning class. They are not different from the property-managing class under the socialist economy.

2. The Trustee *will not be allowed* to appropriate for his personal use more than twelve times the income of the poorest paid workers. The difference in the incomes of the managerial class and the common run of workers, permitted in Soviet Russia is much wider than is allowed under Gandhism. Yet, the critics must accuse Gandhism of allowing "larger and

larger accumulations of capital on the one hand and pauperization of the masses on the other"! It may also be pointed out that since the instruments of production under Gandhism will be comparatively simple and cheap, the danger of the managerial class appropriating political and economic power will be much less than under socialism.

3. Production under the Gandhian economy *will not* be unplanned. The character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed. What warrant the critics have for asserting that "production will continue by unplanned private competition" is difficult to ascertain.

4. In case the Trustee does not conform to the discipline imposed by the doctrine, and, as the critic fears, goes on appropriating the Surplus Value under a pious guise, the Gandhian technique *will not* rest content with "wishing a change in the hearts and minds of the owners of property." I commend to him the following dialogue reproduced from *Young India:*

Question: How will you bring about the Trusteeship? Is it by persuation?

Answer: Not merely by verbal persuasion. I will concentrate on my means. My means are non-co-operation. No person can amass wealth without the co-operation, willing or forced, of the people concerned.

Question: If you are assured that a person would never be a trustee in the sense in which you would like to have him, do you not think the State would be justified in taking away those things from him

with the minimum use of violence?

Answer: Yes, the State will as a matter of fact take away those things, and I think it will be justified if it uses the minimum of violence. But the fear is always there that the State may use too much violence against those who differ from it. I would be very happy indeed if the people concerned behaved as trustees; *but if they fail, I believe we shall have to deprive them of their possessions through the State with the minimum exercise of violenee.* That is why I said at the Round Table Conference that every vested interest must be subjected to scrutiny, and confiscation ordered if necessary—with or without compensation as the case demanded. What I would personally prefer would be not a centralization of power in the hands of the State, but an extension of the sense of trusteeship; as in my opinion the violence of private ownership is less injurious than the violence of the State."*

5. Economic Structure of a Non-Violent Society: The character of Gandhian economy reflects Gandhiji's social philosophy, whose basic principle is non-violence. A democratic society is for him a non-violent society. Gandhiji believes that the failure of Western democracy is due not so much to its institutional shortcomings, as to its failure to adopt non-violence as its basic social value. Political exploitation and economic inequality are but inevitable concomitants of this vital neglect. Democracy is bound to degenerate into an instrument of tyranny, through im-

* Quoted by N. K. Bose, *Studies in Gandhism*.

perialism abroad and denial of purchasing power to the masses at home, unless it eschews appeal to force as a method of arriving at truth and justice. The socialists have hitherto maintained—and rightly—that true democracy is not possible without socialism. Gandhiji goes further and says that neither true democracy nor true socialism are conceivable in any but a non-violent society. One may add that even non-violence will be a farce without democracy and socialism, but it cannot be denied that Gandhiji, with the perspicacity of a prophet, discovered the vital deficiency of all social Utopias, modern as well as ancient. Marx supplied an antidote to the 19th century capitalism; Gandhiji, possessing the advantage of having witnessed the 20th century, prescribes a remedy for a later disease, capitalism plus totalitarianism. Socialism alone may not be able to restore democracy to the pedestal of a great ideal; it will require the aid of a New Man, who resists evil activity but non-violently.

For a variety of reasons, which no sociologist can overlook, Gandhiji believes that this non-violent society will have to be less complex than the one at present. The world has become too vast to be intelligently comprehended by an average man. In order to hide his ignorance, the average man prefers to accept manufactured opinions. And the vendors of opinions, in order to make them marketable, label them with plausible prejudices. Many, therefore, have begun to feel that the complexity of the modern world must be reduced. The complexity may be a matter of pride to the scientists and the capitalists, it spells sla-

very and blind faith for the masses. The work-a-day world must be made understandable to the common man. The circumscribing of its ambit will enable him to live in it more intelligently and resist evil more effectively. To-day he is at the mercy of Fuehrers and demagogues, and on those few occasions when he decides to fight, he resembles Don Quixote striking at the wind-mill.

The non-violent society of the Gandhian pattern, therefore, aims at drawing the frontiers of the common man's world closer to him. It thus aims at localising all factors which have a bearing on the basic aspects of his life. The factors which affect his well being must be compressed within the ken of his mental vision. Only then will he be able to govern himself and realise true democracy. As long he has no comprehension or control of the factors which affect his life, self-government in the true sense of the word will be, at best, only an illusion. This lack of comprehension in the common man provides temptations to ambitious individuals, groups, or nations to assume responsibility for his governance. And the experience of all known history is that the torch of disinterestedness is before long extinguished and those who come to serve remain to rule.

The mechanical inventions which opened up the frontiers for commercial and political adventurers, made the world mysterious for the common man. The railway and the steamship which connected continents made the intellecutal horizon of the common man more hazy. They exposed him to unknown storms

and left him more vulnerable, oscillating between total apathy at one extreme and irrational enthusiasm at the other. The choice to-day is between being governed by experts or by adventurers. The latter, as we all know, have preponderated.

It is true that Gandhiji wants a smaller world for the common man, but that is not with a view to denying him the luxury of exotic articles or keeping him poor and uncivilised. We know, as a matter of fact that even with open frontiers he has to-day no access to plenty or civilization. Gandhiji wants narrower frontiers in order that the common man may live more and more intelligently and save himself from the depredations of experts and adventurers who very often masquerade as saviours and liberators. Wider frontiers have meant a narrower margin of freedom and a narrower range of initiative, though, judged purely by an economic criterion a wide world is an advantage. In the days of scarcity the adoption of the economic criterion was perhaps a progressive step. But in an age in which technique has made abundance possible, further progress must consist in the adoption of other values besides the supply of material goods. In the days of Marx the problem of plenty was still unsolved. Besides, he wanted that plenty for the masses. Gandhiji has accepted the equalitarian values of socialism. But he prefers to judge human happiness not by the quantity of goods that every one can possess—though he accepts the necessity of a very liberal minimum—but by the range of genuine freedom that every one enjoys. He will not like to work for an abundance of

goods if for acquiring it man has to sacrifice his freedom and rationality. Political and economic freedoms are not enough. Freedom and liberty lose their value if they are made articles of presentation by well intentioned leaders and political parties. They must form the ingredients of the very ethos of our civic existence. Men will not feel free if they have to live in a society whose working remains mysterious to them. Even if such a society is free from poverty and exploitation, the feeling of being free will not come as long as that freedom depends on the wisdom of experts and political leaders. In Gandhiji's smaller world freedom will be sustained by the common man and will be for the first time freed from the monopolies of the aristocracy of the intellectuals.

Writing on the principles of fundamental democratization, Professor Mannheim makes some germane observations.[1] "Every step in the concentration of the control in the material apparatus of the society as described by Karl Marx and Max Weber—the concentration of the means of production, as well as that of military and political weapons—is a growing threat to the dynamic principles of democratization, and brings about the dominance of small minorities under capitalism as well as under communism. In the former, it is apt to lead to political, economic and cultural feudalism, in the latter, the intellectual and executive functions tend to become bureaucratic to the last degree."

Apart from the concentration and centralization of

1 *Man and Society.*

capital, Mannheim notes three ways in which positions of social power are monopolised, all of which are in conflict with the process of fundamental democratization. (1) The rising significance of the specialised expert who is highly trained within a limited sphere. The result is that "*Social-knowledge* and the power of making decisions become more and more concentrated for purely practical reasons in a limited number of politicians, economic leaders, administrators, and jurists. (2) Hand in hand with the monopolization of knowledge goes concentration of administrative activity in a bureaucracy which is becoming increasingly separated from the other social strata.... As a mediator between different social groups or as an ally of certain classes, the bureaucracy as an indispensable new functional unit will know how to establish its monopoly control. (3) In the decisive political conflicts of the near future, however, the greatest political significance must be attached to the concentration of the instruments of military power.... The concentration of military instruments lessens the chances of every type of insurrection and revolution, as well as of the execution of the democratic mass will."

In the economic sphere this baffling vastness was created by the annihilation of the parochial walls around the village market. World markets sprang up, fed by articles produced at one end of the earth and consumed at the other. Farmers remained parochial and prices became universal. This lag in growth, caused by the advance of technology, and commercially exploited by capitalist adventurers, caused misery to

millions of masses all over the world. Moved by this tragedy, Marx suggested socialization of ownership of the instruments of production and their utilization not for private profit but in the service of the masses. Though now benevolent, the socialized economic world will still remain incomprehensible to the masses at large. Bureaucrats may now take the place of self-seeking capitalists. Economically the masses will be better off but they will now be at the mercy of a political and managerial aristocracy and, therefore, essentially unfree. They produce but only what others plan; the new masters are better, but still they are masters. The new masters will even honour them by naming the system the dictatorship of the proletariat, yet in all major political and economic decisions, the masses will receive and not give orders, will not dictate but will be dictated to. Such dependence is no freedom.

In Gandhiji's scheme, markets once again retire within parish walls and the producers regain their freedom. For the new market will be a producers' market and not that of a speculator, a finance capitalist or a State official. Essential goods, will be produced within a range which a common man can mentally reach. The limit of this range cannot be arbitrarily determined, but the guiding principle will be the mental reach of the masses of men. They will not only produce, they will also plan; others may advise but they will decide. They will certainly own the instruments of production, but the instruments will not be the ambitious giants of today, pretending to create

plenty but in fact robbing the producer and the consumer of their independence. True, they will produce less, but the purpose of production will be neither profit nor power. True, again, that their productive power will be less but so will be their greed to seek empires. The workers will know to what purpose they are worked, and will need no high-pressure propaganda from professional rulers for sustaining their allegiance. The choice perhaps is between freedom and plenty. The hungry ones may perhaps be tempted immediately to choose the latter, but by and by they will realise that plenty without freedom creates new hungers.